

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 09845 020521Z

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 EB-11 CU-04 SIL-01 LAB-06 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5773

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, JA

SUBJ: VISIT TO US OF PRESIDENT, HONDA MOTOR CO., LTD.

REF: STATE 150381

1. ACCORDING TO SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR KAWASHIMA, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO YMCA REQUESTED DONATION MOTOR BIKES FROM HONDA TO HELP COMBAT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN US. MR. HONDA RESPONDED WITH COMMITMENT DONATE 10,000 MOTOR BIKES.

2. UP TO PRESENT TIME, 5,000 HAVE BEEN SENT, REMAINING UNITS AVAILABLE SHIPMENT ON REQUEST FROM YMCA.

3. KAWASHIMA UNDERSTANDS USG DONATED \$750,000 TO YMCA FOR THIS PROGRAM TWO YEARS AGO, AND LAST YEAR GAVE \$500,000. HOWEVER, HE UNDERSTANDS NO DONATION FROM USG IS FORTHCOMING THIS YEAR. BASED ON THIS, HE SURMISES THAT IN ADDITION TO MR. HONDA'S OWN WISH TO MEET THE PRESIDENT, YMCA MAY ALSO WISH USE OCCASION TO IMPRESS ON PRESIDENT IMPORTANCE THAT YMCA ATTACHES TO USG SUPPORT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PROGRAM.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES GESTURE OF PRESIDENT SEEING HONDA WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED IN JAPAN AND WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE REGARDED AS EVIDENCE OF PRESIDENT'S EMPATHY TOWARD JAPAN. INCIDENTALLY, IT WOULD NOT AT ALL BE INCONSISTENT WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 09845 020521Z

PRACTICE OF PRIME MINISTER TANAKA SEEING PROMINENT AMERI-

CAN BUSINESS LEADERS.

5. PRESIDENT MAY FIND VISIT OF INTEREST. ALTHOUGH UNASSUMING IN NATURE AND UNPREPOSSESSING IN APPEARANCE, HONDA IS REPRESENTATIVE OF TRUE "RAGS TO RICHES" STORY SO APPRECIATED BY AMERICANS. HE STARTED HIS CAREER IN 1920'S AS APPRENTICE IN A REPAIR GARAGE SHOP. IN 1948 HE FORMED HONDA MOTOR COMPANY WITH \$3,000 CAPITAL AND 34 EMPLOYEES. BY 1962 HE HAD LED THE COMPANY TO ITS UNDISPUTED POSITION OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MOTORCYCLE PRODUCER. SHOESMITH.

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